

CLAIMS:

What is claimed:

1 *sub*
2 *ai* A method of marketing a marketable entity selected from a group consisting of goods and
3 services, the method comprising the steps:

- 4 a. creating a digital data base controlled by a Provider;
5 b. offering a potential reward to a first party in exchange for promotional assistance
6 of the first party, the promotional assistance comprising assistance in a forwarding
7 of a first e-mail message to a second party, the first e-mail message comprising a
8 personalized referral for the marketable entity, and a first set of data comprising a
9 first serial number and a first URL link;
10 c. creating a first Web site corresponding to the first URL link, the first Web site
11 providing information on the referenced marketable entity and an offer to transact
12 for the referenced marketable entity;
13 d. correlating the first set of data in the first e-mail message to a first set of database
14 data within the database, including data within the database relating to the
15 potential reward offered to the first party in exchange for promotional assistance;
16 and
e. forwarding the first e-mail message to a second party.

1 2. The method of Claim 1 according to a Wholly Data Base process, the step of forwarding
2 the first e-mail message to the second party being preceded by the steps:

- 3 a. forwarding an e-mail address of the second party by the first party to the data base
4 of the Provider; and

5 b. updating the data base according to the e-mail address of the second party,
6 wherein the step of e-mailing the second party is performed by an automatic e-
7 mail forwarding program associated with the data base.

1 3. The method according to Claim 2 wherein step of forwarding an e-mail address of the
2 second party to the data base of the Provider is performed through an e-mail field
3 accessed through a Web browser.

1 4. The method according to Claim 2 wherein the step of forwarding an e-mail address of
2 the second party to the data base of the Provider further comprises the step of forwarding
3 an e-mail address of a third party to the data base of the Provider.

1 5. The method of Claim 1 according to a Token Implementation process wherein the step of
2 forwarding the first e-mail message to the second party is preceded by the steps:
3 a. visiting the first Web site by the first party;
4 b. updating digital data selected from a group consisting of data within the data base
5 and data within the first e-mail message.

1 6. The method of to Claim 5 wherein the first e-mail message comprises a token in the form
2 of a first icon, and the step of updating digital data comprises the steps:
3 a. submitting the token to a field within the first Web site; and
4 b. retrieving a new token from the Web site, the new token defined according to
5 updated data.

1 7. The method of to Claim 6 wherein the step of updating digital data comprises the steps
2 of:
3 a. generating a second serial number; and

4 b. updating the data base to authenticate the second serial number.

1 8. The method of to Claim 1 according to an Instant Forwarding With Tracking process
2 wherein the step of forwarding the first e-mail message to the second party comprises the
3 steps:

4 a. forwarding the first e-mail message from the first party to the second party; and

5 b. forwarding an authenticating e-mail message from the first party to the Provider,
6 the authenticating message comprising a first serial number and an identifier of
7 the second party, the authenticating e-mail message thereby enabling the second
8 party to access the first Web site and transact for the marketable entity.

9 c. adding the identifier of the second party to the data base.

1 9. The method according to claim 8 wherein the steps of forwarding the first e-mail message
2 to the second party and the step of forwarding the authenticating e-mail message to the
3 Provider are performed as the result of a single mail command initiated by the first party.

1 10. The method according to claim 9 wherein the step of forwarding the authenticating
2 message is preceded by the step of entering an e-mail address of the Provider into a field.

1 11. The method according to claim 10 wherein the identifier of the second party is an e-mail
2 address of the second party.

1 12. The method according to claim 8 wherein the first serial number comprises a unique e-
2 mail address of the Provider.

1 13. The method according to Claim 1 wherein the step of offering a potential reward to the
2 first party is performed through a medium selected from a group consisting of e-mail,
3 Web site communication, FAX, pager, telephony, postal mail and hand delivery.

1 14. The method according to claim 1 wherein the first party is not limited to a single process
2 for forwarding the first message to the second party, the method selected from a group
3 consisting of an Instant Forwarding with Tracking process, a Token Implementation
4 process, and a Wholly Data Base process.

1 15. The method according to Claim 1 wherein the first URL link is comprised of the first
2 serial number, such that the first URL link is a unique URL address associated with a
3 uniquely defined privilege of Web access intended for a specific party.

1 16. The method according to Claim 1 wherein the first URL link is a general URL link to the
2 first Web site, and wherein access to the first Web site is secured by presentation of a
3 serial number distinct from the first URL link.

1 17. The method according to claim 1 wherein the first URL link is accessible through a token
2 in the form of a first icon visible in the message.

1 18. The method according to claim 15 wherein the first e-mail message further comprises a
2 second icon for accessing a second URL link, wherein the first URL link is addressed to
3 access information about the marketable entity and the second URL link is addressed to
4 access information about a rewards referral program.

- 1 19. The method according to claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
- 2 a. accessing the first Web site by the second party according to the first URL link
- 3 embedded in the first e-mail message;
- 4 b. transacting for the marketable entity by the second party; and
- 5 c. crediting the first party with a reward.

- 1 20. The method according to claim 17 wherein the step of transacting for the marketable
2 entity is performed online through a Web site.

- 1 21. The method according to claim 18 further comprising the steps
- 2 a. of creating a credit account within the data base; and
- 3 b. recording the reward credited to the first party.

- 1 22. The Method according to claim 19 wherein the reward credited to the first party in
2 exchange for promotional assistance comprises a monetary reward.

- 1 23. The method according to claim 20 wherein the step of rewarding the first party further
2 comprises the steps:
- 3 a. waiting a predetermined minimum time; and
- 4 b. electronically transferring the monetary reward into a reward target selected from
- 5 a group consisting of a bank account, checking account, creditor, savings account,
- 6 IRA, money market fund, and charity.

- 1 24. The method according to claim 20 wherein the reward offered to the first party in
2 exchange for promotional assistance comprises a non-monetary reward.

1 25. The method according to claim 22 wherein the non-monetary reward is divisible among a
2 plurality of parties being rewarded.

1 26. The method according to claim 23 wherein the non-monetary reward is in the form of
2 credits which can be accumulated and redeemable for a variety of rewards.

1 27. The Method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of offering a potential
2 reward to the second party in exchange for promotional assistance.

1 28. The method according to claim 25 wherein the offer of rewards to the first party and the
2 second party in exchange for promotional assistance is metered according to a Limited
3 Pyramid Metering algorithm, wherein the first party is granted a privilege of forwarding a
4 greater number of messages than the second party.

1 29. The method according to claim 25 further comprising a step of forwarding a second e-
2 mail message comprising a referral for the marketable entity from the second party to a
3 third party.

1 30. The method according to claim 27 further comprising the steps:
2 a. creating a referral lineage within the data base; and
3 b. storing identifiers of referring parties within the referral lineage.

1 31. The method according to claim 28 further comprising the step of limiting an aggregate
2 reward per transaction according to a first rewards-limiting algorithm.

1 32. The method according to claim 29 wherein the first rewards-limiting algorithm is selected
2 by a user from among a plurality of rewards limiting algorithms approved by the
3 Provider.

1 33. The method according to claim 29 wherein the first rewards-limiting algorithm is selected
2 from a group consisting of a weighted rewards method, a maximum chain-length method,
3 a progressive rewards method, a coupon shelf-life method and a limited pyramid metering
4 method..

1 34. The method according to claim 30 further comprising the steps of:
2 a. accessing a Web site according to the URL link imbedded in the first e-mail
3 message;
4 b. transacting for the marketable entity recommended in the message; and
5 c. rewarding select referring parties with a reward according to the first rewards
6 limiting algorithm.

1 35. The method according to claim 30 further comprising the steps:
2 a. analyzing data in the data base; and
3 b. modifying a referral rewards program.

1 36. The method according to claim 32 wherein the step of analyzing data in the data base is
2 preceded by the step of storing referral reward data and transaction data in the data base.

1 37. The method according to claim 1 wherein the step of offering a reward to a first party in
2 exchange for promotional assistance is preceded by a step of transacting for an original
3 marketable entity.

1 38. The method according to claim 34 wherein the marketable entity promoted by the first
2 party is related to the original marketable entity.

1 39. The method according to claim 35 wherein the original entity is selected from a group
2 consisting of big-ticket goods, big-ticket services, speciality goods and specialty services.

1 40. The method according to Claim 1 further comprising the step of securing the database to
2 authorized personnel only.

1 41. The method according to claim 37 further comprising the steps of
2 a. issuing a unique access code to each vendor whose goods or services are
3 represented within the data base; and
4 b. granting vendors limited access to the data base .

1 42. The method according to Claim 37 wherein the step of securing the data base comprises
2 the steps:
3 a. promulgating a company wide policy prohibiting sale or exchange of the database
4 to other companies; and
5 b. enforcing the company wide policy prohibiting sale or exchange of the database to
6 other companies.

1 43. The method according to 28 further comprising the steps:
2 a. attempting to access the first Web site by an entreating party; and
3 b. evaluating authorization of the entreating party to access the first Web site.

- 1 44. The method according to claim 40 further comprising the steps:
- 2 a. determining that the entreating party lacks authorization for access to the first
- 3 Web site;
- 4 b. denying the entreating party access to the first Web site; and
- 5 c. displaying a message to the unauthorized visitor.

- 1 45. The method according to claim 41 wherein the step of evaluating access authorization
- 2 comprises the step of examining data selected from a group consisting of the referral
- 3 lineage within the data table and an identifier of a visitor to the Web site.

- 1 46. A method of marketing a marketable entity selected from a group consisting of goods and
- 2 services comprising the steps:
- 3 a. transacting for a first marketable entity by a first party;
- 4 b. offering a reward to a first party to assist in recommending a second marketable
- 5 entity substantially similar to the first marketable entity to a second party wherein
- 6 the recommendation results in a transaction; and
- 7 c. forwarding an e-mail to a second party, the e-mail comprising a recommendation
- 8 for the second marketable entity and a URL link to a Web site.

- 1 47. The method according to claim 43 wherein the recommendation comprises a discount for
- 2 the second marketable entity.

- 1 48. The method according to claim 43 further comprising the steps:
- 2 a. accessing the Web site by the second party;
- 3 b. transacting for the second marketable entity
- 4 c. issuing a reward to the first party

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